

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application of:
Boris Mayer et al.

Application No.: 10/524,243

Confirmation No.: 4628

Filed: August 1, 2003

Art Unit: 3628

For: METHOD FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF
POSTAL ITEMS AND PACKAGE MAILBOX

Examiner: Akiba K. Robinson
Boyce

RESPONSE TO FINAL OFFICIAL ACTION

MS AF
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Madam:

This paper is presented in response to the final official action dated June 4, 2009, wherein (a) claims 12-16 were pending, and (b) claims 12-16 were newly rejected as obvious over Hansen.

The obviousness rejection is respectfully traversed, and reconsideration is requested.

Independent claim 12 (the only independent claim in the application) is directed to a method for conveying mailpieces using an electronic parcel compartment system with multiple compartments of at least two different sizes, in which a payment checking procedure is carried out to confirm the presence of at least one of a monetary amount and monetary information in a pre-definable amount, and wherein an access possibility for depositing a mailpiece is activated only if the payment checking procedure has confirmed the presence of at least one of said monetary amount and said monetary information.

Further, the size of the compartment that opens is directly related to a set of numbers of recorded identification information and a compartment of appropriate size is opened for a set of numbers of a certain price class.

The action recognizes that the features of payment checking before opening a locker and selecting the locker not only in terms of size but also with respect to the price class is not described by the Hansen reference. The action merely alleges that these two features, although not described in the prior art would be obvious. However, this allegation is based on evaluation by hindsight.

Starting from Hansen as closest prior art, an objective of the invention is to improve the described method in terms of locker space usage and level of security. This is achieved by the above-mentioned features of the claims. The monetary checking procedure serves for security in that the locker opens only in the event of positive feedback, and the monetary information influences the offered lockers with respect to their price category. So, both of these distinguishing features of the claims supplement one another.

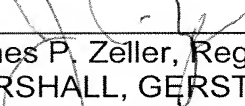
To achieve the above-mentioned objective of the invention, a skilled artisan would have numerous alternatives, but no hint from Hansen, Moskowitz, or Chapman, Jr. to arrive at the particular solution reflected in independent claim 12 and dependent claims 13-16.

Claims 12-16 are not obvious over the applied art, since the limitations of the claims cannot be derived from the prior art, and contribute to the claimed method in solving a problem. Withdrawal of the obviousness rejection and allowance of all claims 12-16 are therefore respectfully solicited.

Should the examiner wish to discuss the foregoing or any matter of form in an effort to advance this application toward allowance, she is urged to telephone the undersigned at the indicated number.

July 28, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

By 
James P. Zeller, Reg. No. 28,491
MARSHALL, GERSTEIN & BORUN LLP
6300 Willis Tower
233 South Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6357
(312) 474-6300
Attorney for Applicant